

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: July 10, 2014

Agenda Item: Calypso Access Public Land Easement

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Endorsement to Proceed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background

FWP proposes to purchase a permanent road easement across private land to provide public access to more than 40,000 acres of land owned and administered by the federal Bureau of Land Management and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation in Prairie County. The proposed easement is located approximately 4 miles west of Terry at the Calypso Bridge on the Yellowstone River. The easement crosses one-quarter mile of private land before connecting to an existing developed road in the Terry Badlands. The road easement will provide year-round access for all types of public recreation. FWP further proposes to purchase the easement and to transfer the road easement, or administrative authority for the road easement, to Prairie County.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Pending Fish & Wildlife Commission endorsement, an environmental assessment and subsequent public involvement will be developed.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposed Action: FWP proposes to purchase a permanent road easement, from a willing landowner, across private land to provide year round permanent public access to a large block of BLM and DNRC land. FWP would secure permanent public access to this land for hunting as well as hiking, camping, fishing, wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreational activities.

No Action: FWP would forgo the opportunity to purchase a needed access easement. Should the property sell or the landowner have a change in management, public access could be lost or severely curtailed.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends approval by the Fish & Wildlife Commission to proceed with the road access easement development, negotiation and purchase with a willing landowner. This project will provide public road access in perpetuity to 40,000 + acres of public land in the Prairie County.

Proposed Motion

I move the Fish & Wildlife Commission endorse the recommendation to begin negotiations for a permanent public access road easement to provide public access to this area.